

Mr. Speaker, before I reserve my time, I would note for the record that there are two other much more plausible candidates for consideration by the full House that were introduced by the gentleman from California. One addressed the cybersecurity threat and was ordered reported in April. The other authorizes DHS's chemical facility security program and is pending on the Union Calendar.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of the Union Calendar, I would also note that this bill is receiving expedited consideration while four measures ordered reported by the Committee on Homeland Security remain on the Union Calendar without action.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am proud, at this time, to yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. LUNGREN), who is chairman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies; and during his time on the committee has contributed as much as, if not more than, any other Member, and, in fact, returned to Congress for the purpose of doing all he could to enhance our homeland security.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I might say that this should not be a surprise bill to anybody. This is actually a part of the authorization bill that we already worked on. It has come about as a result of the fact of complaints from local jurisdictions that they were unable to utilize funds in a way that they thought was most effective.

This bill would simply permit recipients of certain FEMA grants to use this funding for training and exercises conducted in conjunction with a national lab or Federal research facility. There's no additional cost. The CBO report shows there's no additional cost. In other words, the bill expands the allowable use of FEMA grants and ensures that emergency managers, first responders, and local governments can use these grant dollars to leverage the expertise of our national labs and research facilities.

We have had plenty of hearings on the viability of our national labs and research facilities and the fact that we need to leverage more, in these tough budget times, their expertise to help us come up with solutions and prepare, among others, first responders to the challenges that we face in these times. With fewer grant dollars available, it's important that State and local governments be able to use them for the greatest public benefit.

As we all know, State and local governments everywhere are also operating under severe budget limitations, and increasing the allowable use of FEMA grants helps these cash-strapped governments to address their emer-

gency needs. Using our existing national assets for training and research is another way to efficiently leverage the scientific expertise available at these facilities.

I just want to correct the record. This is not just cosponsored by two other Members, both of whom are Republicans. It is cosponsored by Representative STARK from California and Representative LUJÁN from New Mexico. In addition, on the Republican side, Mr. TURNER from New York, Mr. LONG from Missouri, Mr. MARINO from Pennsylvania, Mr. BILIRAKIS from Florida, and Mr. KING from New York.

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We have heard not only from entities in the State of California, but I believe also in New York and New Jersey about concerns that they were unable to use their grants in the most efficient way, and absent a clarification of statutory language, FEMA was not going to allow them to participate in this way.

Now, some would ask what examples might we have of how these funds might be used. I will just use my home State of California. The Naval Postgraduate School, which is a Federal entity in Monterey, provides unique training to State and local officials through its Center for Homeland Defense and Security. The Lawrence Livermore Laboratory is a government-owned, contract-operated facility managed through a contract between the Laboratory Board of Governors and DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration. These national labs can provide a myriad of research and technical support to programs that support State and local emergency responders, things such as risk analysis and security systems evaluation. And just another example, the Navy Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command in San Diego has substantial capability and interest in helping emergency responders with communications and nuclear detention.

So we are responding in as quick a fashion as we can to complaints that we've heard from local jurisdictions that they were unable to use their FEMA grants in the most effective way in leveraging, as I say, the expertise, the unique expertise of national labs and Federal research facilities. That is the purpose of this legislation. It is a very simple, a one-sentence clarification of the underlying statute. I would hope that we have unanimous support for this bill.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to close. I don't have any more speakers.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, Mr. KING had to leave, and I ask unanimous consent that I control the time of Representative KING.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California will control the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, we owe it to our Nation's first

responders to ensure that they have the resources needed to perform their jobs and to get it right when we alter the allowable uses for those funds. Getting it right in this body requires deliberation and debate in the committee of jurisdiction.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the bill we are considering today failed to receive such deliberation or debate. Therefore, it is hard to say whether it is responsive to the needs of first responders. What I can say for a fact is reauthorizing key Homeland Security grant programs would bolster preparedness and be responsive to the needs of our first responders.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, this is a simple bill responding to a simple problem. Actually, this bill undoes redtape that ought not to be there. It leverages the best assets of the Federal Government, working with our first responders in our local communities in ways that they asked us to try and deal with the problem. It's not a fancy bill. It is a simple bill. It is straightforward. And, therefore, I ask for a unanimous vote on this from my colleagues, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5843.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

TRANSPORTATION WORKER IDENTIFICATION PROCESS REFORM ACT

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3173) to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to reform the process for the enrollment, activation, issuance, and renewal of a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) to require, in total, not more than one in-person visit to a designated enrollment center, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3173

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) United States workers employed at nearly 2,600 marine facilities and onboard nearly 13,000

United States-flag vessels are required to carry a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) under the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA). Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations require merchant mariners who hold a Coast Guard-issued Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) and individuals who require unescorted access to secure areas of MTSA-regulated vessels and facilities to carry a TWIC.

(2) To date, nearly two million transportation workers have applied for and received a TWIC. Applicants must pay \$132.50 to obtain the TWIC, and make two or more trips to an enrollment center to apply for, and then to pick up and activate, their TWIC.

(3) A TWIC is valid for a maximum of five years, at which time the cardholder must request issuance of a new card. This process requires workers to make an additional two or more trips to the enrollment center and again pay \$132.50 to receive a new card.

(4) In addition to the cost of the card, workers face the burden of making two or more time-consuming and often expensive round trips to a TWIC enrollment center. In many instances, the nearest enrollment center is hundreds of miles from a worker's home.

(5) The TWIC enrollment process requiring two or more round trips to an enrollment center is not mandated by statute or by regulation. The process is driven by a DHS policy decision to align the requirements for TWIC issuance with standards for Personal Identity Verification (PIV) for Federal employees and contractors. These standards are contained in Federal Information Processing Standard Publication 201 (FIPS-201).

(6) While DHS has made the policy decision to generally align the TWIC enrollment process with the FIPS-201 standard, the Department may elect to deviate from this standard in instances where it believes an alternative approach is more appropriate for the TWIC program.

(7) Unlike other Government-issued credentials that adhere to the FIPS-201 standard, the TWIC is effectively a work permit for a highly-mobile private sector workforce.

(8) Possession of a TWIC does not allow a TWIC holder to gain unescorted access to secure areas of MTSA-regulated vessels and facilities unless the TWIC holder is authorized to do so under a Coast Guard-approved vessel or facility security plan.

(9) DHS has the statutory authority and regulatory flexibility to develop an alternative process for TWIC enrollment and issuance that does not require applicants to make multiple trips to a TWIC enrollment center.

(10) Other secure Government-issued identity documents, including United States passports, can be distributed to applicants by mail.

(11) Congress mandated the issuance of a final rule setting forth requirements for TWIC biometric readers no later than two years after the TWIC pilot began, which would have been August 2010; such a final rule has to date not been issued.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) to avoid further imposing unnecessary and costly regulatory burdens on United States workers and businesses, it is urgent that the TWIC application process be reformed by not later than the end of 2012, when hundreds of thousands of current TWIC holders will begin to face the requirement to renew their TWICs;

(2) the Secretary of Homeland Security should promulgate final regulations that require the deployment of TWIC readers as soon as practicable, in order to ensure the TWIC program realizes its intended security purpose; and

(3) funds, which have been awarded under the Port Security Grant Program for the purpose of funding TWIC projects, shall not expire before the issuance of the final TWIC reader rule.

SEC. 3. TWIC APPLICATION REFORM.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall reform the process for the enrollment, activation, issuance, and renewal of a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) to require, in total, not more than one in-person visit to a designated enrollment center except in cases in which there are extenuating circumstances, as determined by the Secretary, requiring more than one such in-person visit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3173 requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to reform the process for issuing the Transportation Worker Identification Credential, known as TWIC, to require not more than one in-person visit to an enrollment center except in cases with extenuating circumstances. The need for more than one trip to an enrollment center is not mandated by statute or regulation, but currently by DHS policy. Given that other very important security documents are mailed to people, including the U.S. passport, there is no doubt that the Federal Government can develop secure procedures for delivering TWIC documents to workers.

DHS has the statutory authority and regulatory flexibility to develop an alternative process for TWIC enrollment to ease the burden on transportation workers. The Secretary of Homeland Security should reform the TWIC process before the end of 2012 when the first TWICs issued in 2007 will need to be renewed and allow applicants to complete the process in only one in-person visit.

I would like to thank Congressman STEVE SCALISE for the commonsense bill and urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3173, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this measure directs the Department of Homeland Security to reform the process for the enrollment, activation, issuance, and renewal of a Transportation Worker Identification Credential, or TWIC, to require not

more than one in-person visit to an enrollment center to obtain a credential. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill.

Since the inception of the TWIC program in 2007, mariners and other transportation workers have had to make at least two trips to a TWIC enrollment center to enroll and activate their cards. In contrast, other federally issued secure identity documents, such as passports and merchant mariner credentials, are mailed to the applicants. It is unreasonable to continue to require workers to take off from work to make a second trip to the nearest TWIC enrollment center, which in some cases is hundreds of miles away, to obtain their credential. The bill before us today would simply treat TWICs like those other federally issued identity documents.

In response to this legislation and concern expressed by worker representatives and Members of Congress, including me, the Obama administration recently announced a new option for port and transportation security workers who, starting this fall, will need to renew their expiring TWIC cards. Under this new option, TWIC holders may renew their cards for 3 years at a reduced rate of \$60 and go to the enrollment center just once.

I'm pleased that the administration heard us on this issue because these changes should help lessen the burden of our Nation's 2.1 million port and transportation security workers, as DHS moves toward issuance of a final rule for biometric readers for the TWICs.

Despite these improvements, H.R. 3173 is still very necessary, as the recently announced option only applies to renewals, not first-time applicants, and there are no guarantees that it will remain in effect for the duration of the program.

Passage of H.R. 3173 will be an important step forward in reforming a cumbersome bureaucratic process and providing relief for the more than 2 million transportation workers.

I urge my colleagues to give H.R. 3173 their support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), the author of the bill.

Mr. SCALISE. I want to thank the gentleman from California for yielding. I also want to thank Chairman KING of New York, as well as Ranking Member THOMPSON of Mississippi, for cosponsoring this commonsense legislation.

What we're trying to do is reform a process that was started back in 2006 that really has created a lot of complications for our transportation workers. What we're talking about is 2 million Americans not only across the country, but some who work around

the globe that are required by Federal law to have these Transportation Worker Identification Credentials not only to perform their jobs, but even to get promoted.

So as these cards come up, whether you're applying for them for the first time or trying to get them renewed, you have to not only make one, but two in-person visits. When we talk about these visits, in many cases people have to take a day off of work for the first, and then another day off of work for the second visit because this is a card that they're required to have if they're going to be able to work in the transportation industry.

The rule that was put in place by TSA really is unworkable and doesn't really make sense, especially as we're talking about safety. It has nothing to do with safety. It's just a rule that they came up with that we recognize, number one, it's not in law, but it's something that we recognize, especially as we talk to our constituents who work in the transportation industry throughout the country, that this is creating tremendous burdens on our employees who have to actually miss work and miss pay that goes along with it.

So we're talking about something that affects people's jobs and their careers and, in fact, in some cases has limited their ability to get promotions.

I want to read parts of a letter that I received from Andrew Drury, who is an assistant cargo mate aboard the USS Mount Whitney. He's in the Merchant Marines, and this has been a problem to him. He wrote in to our office as he heard we were addressing this issue.

He's a graduate of the Citadel and is employed by Military Sealift Command, a company that is tasked with supplying the U.S. Navy with anything from bombs, bullets, fuel and provisions to our Armed Forces. He works throughout Europe and Africa. He writes to say: "Due to my long tours of duty overseas,"—his TWIC card has since expired, and—"I am not allowed to advance in rank or position without the current TWIC credential."

He goes on to write: this means that anybody who currently works overseas has to take time off from work and fly back to the States twice. This is very expensive, time consuming, stressful, and "because I live on a ship that constantly moves around is logistically impossible. Sir, I am writing you in hope that there is something you could do for my fellow Merchant Mariners and me in this precarious situation."

So as we see that 2 million of our workers across the globe are facing this problem, this is a commonsense reform that actually puts some new reforms in place and puts some new rules in place that says you still make that first trip; but just like a passport, you shouldn't have to be required to take time off from work to go back a second time.

Again, I appreciate over 40 cosponsors in a bipartisan way that have

signed onto this. I would urge approval of this legislation.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, with more than 40 bipartisan cosponsors, passage of this measure will make a strong statement of support for reform of the TWIC issuance process and American workers. I compliment the gentleman from Louisiana for introducing this legislation.

I encourage passage of H.R. 3173, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, nearly 2 million transportation workers have applied for and received a TWIC. The goal of this bill is to limit the red tape involved in the TWIC process so we can focus on the work of this Nation while being as secure as possible.

The Secretary needs to reform the Transportation Workers Identification Credential enrollment and renewable process so that our workers are not burdened with increased and unnecessary bureaucracy.

As with the previously considered bill, this is an attempt by those of us in the Congress to try and get rid of some unnecessary red tape. It in no way undercuts the security of our Nation. As a matter of fact, it improves it because it gets rid of a burden on people that is totally without merit.

So I ask my colleagues to support its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3173, "to reform the process for enrollment, activation, issuance, and renewal of a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) to require not more than one in-person visit to a designated enrollment center." This legislation removes economic tensions placed on workers due to unnecessary commutes to an enrollment center. The TWIC serves as a vital security measure that ensures that individuals who pose a threat do not gain unescorted access to secure areas of the nation's maritime transportation system. Without a doubt, it is a necessary precaution for the protection of the America's assets. However, the current system for the acquirement of a TWIC is inefficient, superfluous, and costly for American transportation workers.

In addition to the \$129.75 that transportation employees must pay every 5 years to obtain the TWIC, they must also make two or more trips to an enrollment center to obtain it. In most cases, the nearest enrollment center is hundreds of miles away from the worker's home. With national gas prices averaging nearly \$4 a gallon, any mode of transportation chosen by the worker can quickly become pricey.

This bill seeks to eliminate the pointless red-tape in the attainment of a TWIC, in which millions of Americans are subject to hefty transportation costs to travel back and forth to the enrollment centers to obtain their TWIC.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, many of our fellow Americans face tough economic situa-

tions. It truly is imperative to remove this excess and unnecessary burden placed on the American workers.

As a Member of the Committee of Homeland Security, ensuring the protection of our interests from domestic threats is one of my top priorities. Although TWIC does just that, I feel that we must also endeavor to protect the interest of our own citizens. It simply just is not an economically viable option to expect our transportation workers to pay for two or more round trip journeys for the TWIC. To avoid imposing these unnecessary burdens on United States workers, it is imperative that Congress enact this legislation.

This bill passed unanimously out of the Homeland Security Committee with broad bipartisan support. I believe this is because H.R. 3173 is the text-book example of a win-win situation; there are no foreseen negative consequences to the enactment of this bill. It will simply allow our American transportation workers to breathe a little easier.

This reform of the TWIC Application system will make a huge impact on transportation workers and their families. Because of it, millions of people will not lose money and precious time with loved ones by making unnecessary trips to TWIC enrollment centers.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3173, The TWIC Application Reform.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3173, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5973, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5972, TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 697 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 697

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for